

## Catapults, eggs and kids

# Science project turns ingenuity into fun

by Elane Blanchet

A tradition was re-born at Heppner Junior High School last Thursday when 18 teams of enthusiastic eighth grade scientists flung eggs higher and yon with their original-design catapults in what promises to be the First Annual Eighth Grade Catapult Contest.

Junior High science teacher Syreece Hornbuckle is as enthusiastic as her students with the way the catapult project developed.

"I had seventh graders come to me after the contest and say, 'Miss Hornbuckle, I already have a plan for my catapult.' It's nice to establish a tradition. We'll definitely have it again next year," she said.

Eggs and catapults have been combined before in the Heppner junior high, originally by former teacher Inez Metter, but the idea hasn't been used for several years. With its revival this year, the concept of launching eggs with catapults still proves to be a winner.

The students worked on their catapults for six weeks, starting with research on the concept, designing and drawing up the plans for their own models, and finally constructing the individual designs. After completing a working catapult, the next objective was to construct an egg container which would enable the fragile shell to be hurled by the catapult without breaking.

"This was one of the few times the students get to put their own ideas to work," said Miss Hornbuckle. "They had a lot of freedom which they really enjoyed." She added that though much secrecy surrounded individual team designs, most of the catapults constructed fell into two basic types of propulsion: sling shot and spring action.

The catapult judged to have the most unique design was developed by the team of Jeff Sumner and Kelly Crewse. It was a large, four-foot x four-foot construction with a long metal rod that cranked back to propel the egg. "A deadly thing," Miss Hornbuckle described it. The design was more than unique—it worked! The Sumner-Crewse team walked off with second in the Farthest Distance category and first in Farthest Distance Without Breaking Egg.

A catapult that used a bow-and-arrow mounted on a box for its launching power won second in Unique Design competition. It was engineered by Mark Launer and Pat Parker.

Stephanie Sams and Ann Lindsay concocted an elaborate catapult from welded metal and pipe using a huge coiled spring for propulsion that earned third place in Unique Design. Unfortunately, they also won third place in the Oops category—their complicated machine only tossed the egg a few feet. Miss Hornbuckle said they probably got the least return of any team for the most work.

Most of the egg containers were made from styrofoam, for both lightness and protection. Lea Rush and Darrell Miles developed the most unique container design, combining styrofoam, silicon 'goo' and foam balls, with the egg neatly cushioned in the center. Needless to say, their egg did not break in catapult action.

The Oops awards were given to those poor contestants, who despite their best efforts, just didn't quite make it. The winning team was Earl Hammond and Mike Rothe who somehow managed to break their catapult before even getting one egg off the ground. Sheridan Sweek and Cindy Gochnauer came in second in the division—their paper mache egg container proved too heavy for their machine to launch.

The whole school, from kindergarten through eighth grade, turned out for the contest at 2 p.m. on March 2, with many interested spectators, including proud parents. Though the day was cold, in the 20's, spirits were high.

Probably the most remarkable performance of the day was put on by the team of Don Lott and Dorian Forrar. Using a solid rectangular frame catapult made out of 2 by 4s with a powerful spring release, the team launched their egg 96 feet, over twice as far as their nearest competitor Sumner-Crewse, who managed 46 feet. Though their egg broke, they set a record that will be hard to beat in future years.

And from the excitement generated by the initial contest, eighth graders in Heppner will now have something else to shoot for.

## Catapult Contest Winners

### Farthest Distance

1. Don Lott-Dorian Forrar
2. Jeff Sumner-Kelly Crewse
3. Joe Struthers-Andy Gorman

### Farthest Distance Without Egg Breaking

1. Jeff Sumner-Kelly Crewse
- Joe Struthers-Andy Gorman
- Cindy Bergstrom-Darcy Hollomon

### Best Egg Container

1. Lea Rush-Darrel Miles
2. Patti Devine-Sandra Ward
3. Doug Holland-Rick Klaus

### Most Unique Catapult

1. Jeff Sumner-Kelly Crewse
2. Mark Launer-Pat Parker
3. Stephani Sams-Ann Lindsay

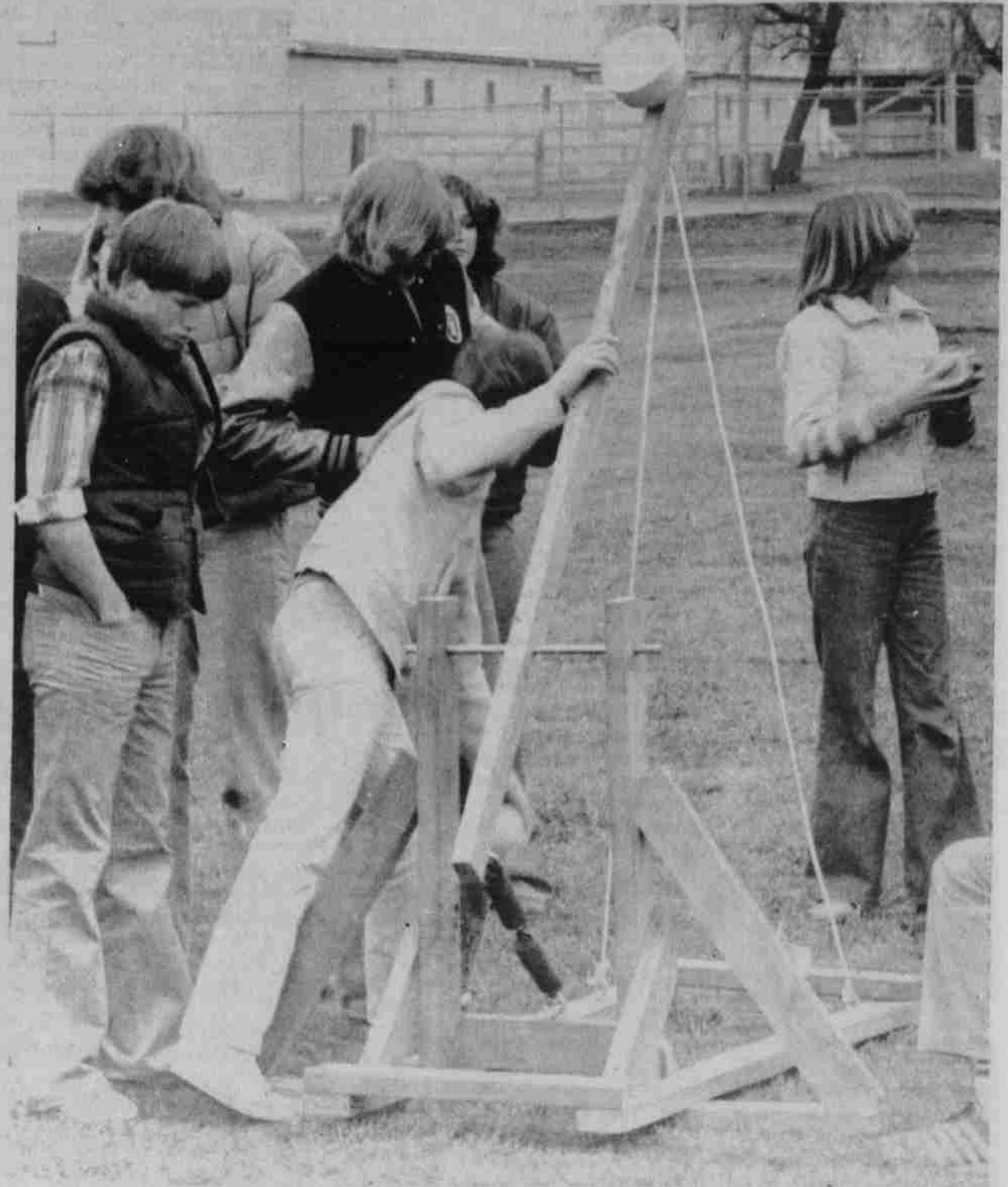
### Oops

1. Earl Hammond-Mike Rothe
2. Sheridan Sweek-Cindy Gochnauer
3. Stephanie Sams-Ann Lindsay

- 11 teams—Unbroken Egg Award  
7 teams—The Yolk's On You Award



Pam Marquardt demonstrates the effectiveness of the small, simple catapult she developed with her partner Becky Smith.



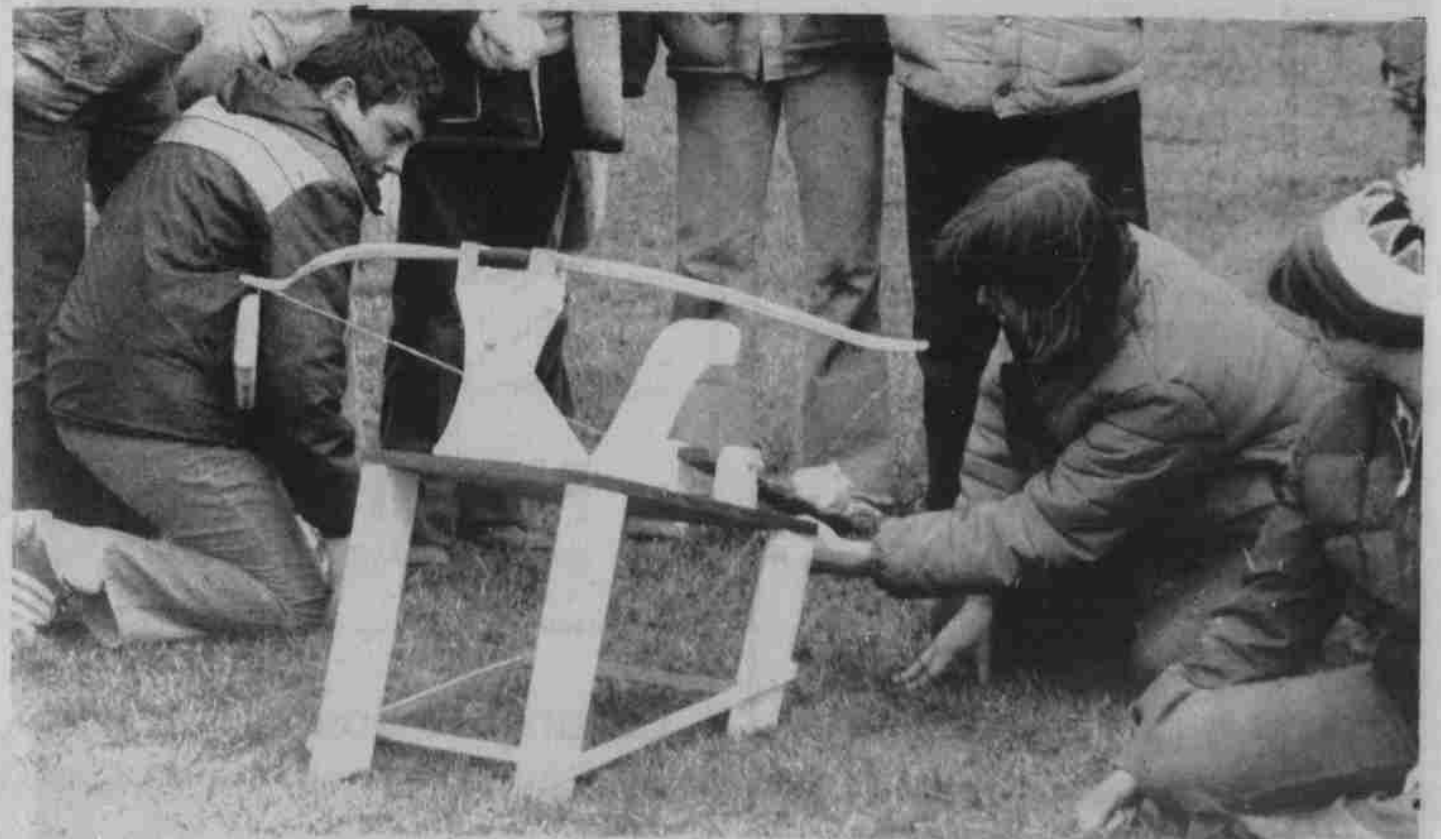
The winning team of Don Lott and Dorian Forrar (center) ready their giant catapult for its impressive 96-foot launch.



Patti Devine (l) and Sandra Ward prime their big sling for action. Doug Garrett offers smiling skepticism.



Joe Struthers (l) and Andy Gorman prepare to hurl an egg from their novel launching pad while Lea Rush looks on.



This bow-and-arrow contraption earned Pat Parker (l) and Mark Launer second place in the Unique Catapult category.